

SOCIAL SERVICES

Lovingly cooked meals

Mama's Kitchen provides freshly-prepared meals for AIDS and cancer patients throughout San Diego County.

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SAFETY

Take defense

The recent brush fire in Manzanita Canyon highlights the importance of creating defensible space.

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EDUCATION

A star student

Hoover High senior Julian Lopez is a top-notch student and athlete. His goal is to get into Harvard University.

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Attention residents!

City Heights Life wants to hear from you! Please submit your articles, photos, letters, events or story ideas to editor@cityheightslife.com.

BUSINESS

Supermarket success

The story behind the Latino supermarket with an Irish name run by an Iraqi-born Catholic.

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Clinics see dramatic growth

Demanda aumenta para las clínicas

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

In the past two years, the Rady Children's Urgent Care Center in City Heights has seen a 19 percent growth in patients. That makes it the busiest Rady's urgent care facility in the county.

Other nonprofit health providers in City Heights are also reporting explosive growth in demand. La Maestra Community Health Centers, which last year opened a 36,000-square-foot headquarters in City Heights, estimates its patient load is increasing by as much as 30 percent a year.

San Diego Family Care, which operates the Mid-City Community Clinic at two separate locations for children and adults, and Family Health Centers of San Diego, which runs the City Heights Family Health Center and Kid Care Express mobile clinics, have experienced the same trend as well.

Family Health Centers is now in the midst of building a 48,000-square-foot facility at 5454 El Cajon Blvd., less than a quarter of a mile away from its existing 5,000-square-foot clinic. The new building is expected to be completed in early 2012.

"The new site will be a much larger comprehensive clinic. We will add dental services, HIV care and case management, and increasing the capacity of our existing services, such

La Maestra Community Health Centers opened a new, 36,000-square-foot facility in the heart of City Heights last year. The new building houses its main medical clinic, pediatrics unit, women's clinic, pharmacy, and other services. **Photo courtesy of La Maestra**

El Centro Comunitario de Salud La Maestra inauguró una instalación de 36,000 pies cuadrados en el corazón de City Heights el año pasado. El nuevo edificio es el hogar de la clínica médica principal, una unidad pediátrica, una clínica de mujeres, farmacia y otros servicios. Foto cortesía de La Maestra

Por Helen Gao
City Heights Life

En los últimos dos años, la cantidad de pacientes que atiende el Centro de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady Children's ubicado en City Heights aumentó en un 19%. Esto hace que el centro de cuidados de urgencia de Rady's sea el centro más concurrido del condado.

Otros proveedores de servicios de salud sin fines de lucro de City Heights también reportan un crecimiento explosivo en la demanda por sus servicios. El Centro Comunitario de Salud La Maestra, que inauguró el año pasado una sede de 36,000 pies cuadrados en City Heights, calcula que la cantidad de pacientes está creciendo a una tasa anual del 30%.

San Diego Family Care, que administra la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City en dos localidades separadas (una para niños y una para

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[CLINICAS, P2]

Congresswoman Susan Davis (pictured left) is a major supporter of Family Health Centers of San Diego, which runs the City Heights Family Health Center. **Photo courtesy of Family Health Centers**

El Centro de Salud Familiar de City Heights es una clínica de cuidados primarios integrales. La congresista Susan Davis (a la izquierda) es una de las principales promotoras de la clínica. Foto cortesía de Family Health Centers



AT YOUR SERVICE

Be prepared for emergencies

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

It's human nature to be complacent when it comes to emergency preparedness because emergencies by definition don't happen very often. While we know we are supposed to make contingency plans to survive a disaster, many of us don't.

For your own peace of mind, take the time to get ready now. Plenty of resources exist locally, regionally, and nationally to help residents with emergency preparedness. To ensure your family is ready and protected when the next blackout, earthquake or wildfire strikes, take advantage of the following resources.

Ready San Diego

Ready San Diego (www.ReadySanDiego.org) was created by the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to both natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

ReadySanDiego.org contains resources on how to prepare your family, pets, children and business for emergencies. The site links to an interactive hazards map created by the California Emergency Management Agency that allows users to enter an address and see whether a location is in the danger zones for earthquake, fire, flood and tsunami.

This website also offers a Family Disaster Plan and Personal Survival Guide in multiple languages, including Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. In addition, it features real-time Twitter feeds from local public safety agencies about fires and other emergencies.

FEMA Ready Kids

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has created a special website — www.ready.gov/kids — filled with cartoon characters, activities and games to make emergency preparedness fun for kids.

Pack it Up, one of the interactive games featured on the site, helps children and their families remember what to put in an emergency supply kit. There is also a scavenger hunt game, which is designed to get the whole family involved in collecting supplies for the kit. Visitors to the site can print out instructions on how to play the game with their family.

Another section of the website educates children about weather events and unexpected situations, everything from earthquakes to tsunamis to terrorism.

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as pediatrics, mental health and chronic disease care,” said Jennette Lawrence Shay, director of government and community relations for Family Health Centers.

“More people are demanding care. We needed a larger facility to be able to add physicians and support staff to meet their needs.”

Meanwhile, San Diego Family Care is studying ways to expand services by adding evening hours at its existing Mid-City Community Clinic facilities and exploring new locations, according to Aaron Zaheer, medical director of pediatrics for the organization.

Due to the prolonged economic recession, nonprofit health providers in general are coping with an influx of new patients who have lost their job and health insurance. “As a safety net, we are seeing a huge increase in demand,” Zaheer said.

With federal health care reform, he also believes more patients will be looking for primary care homes and end up at community clinics. Right now, he said, many patients who may qualify for subsidized care in the future are coming in only when they are in dire need. In the future, he expects more patients will take advantage of preventive care.

Collaboration, not competition

While the nonprofit health providers in City Heights are clustered in a relatively small area, they collaborate, rather than compete with each other. Their services and hours tend to complement each other’s.

For example, Mid-City Community Clinic - Pediatrics and Rady Children’s Urgent Care Center share the same space at 4305 University Ave. Mid-City Community Clinic operates during the day and Rady’s provides urgent care late into the evening. Through Rady’s, Mid-City Community Clinic patients have access to radiology services.

La Maestra’s dental clinics are in the same building as Rady’s Urgent Care Center and the Mid-City Community Clinic - Pediatrics. As a result, Mid-City Community Clinic is able to gain designation as a federally qualified health center that provides comprehensive services to underserved populations.

Katherine Konzen, director of urgent care for

Rady’s, said the collaboration between Rady’s and Mid-City Community Clinic has been very successful. “The facilities are used all day long. Patients have great access to care from 8 a.m. in the morning to 10 p.m. at night.”

Commitment to providing culturally-competent services

If there is one thing that the nonprofit health providers have in common, it’s their commitment to ensure their services address the culturally diverse needs of their clients. All the providers make special efforts to hire employees who speak foreign languages, such as Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese, in addition to English. Some of the providers make use of telephone interpretation services when a patient speaks a rare language that nobody on their staff understands.

Zara Marselian, La Maestra’s chief executive officer, said when her organization can’t find staff who speak the native languages of patients, it recruits those speakers from the community and train them to be medical assistants. La Maestra has a model for developing medically-trained cultural liaisons who serve as ambassadors in the community on health care matters and bring feedback on how to improve its services to reach particular ethnic groups.

“We know the only way to gain cultural competence is to hire from the community we serve,” Marselian said.

Providing quality, affordable care

All the nonprofit providers help patients without health care insurance apply for government health programs. For those who don’t qualify for subsidized care, they typically discount fees based on income and family size. As a general rule, the community clinics don’t turn anyone away.

“Our mission is to provide affordable high-quality care to everyone who needs it. We take that mission very seriously,” Shay said.

Because not all of their patients can pay, nonprofit providers rely heavily on public and private grants and fundraising to cover budget gaps.



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adultos) y Family Health Centers de San Diego, que administra el Centro de Salud Familiar de City Heights y las clínicas móviles Kid Care Express han experimentado el mismo patrón de crecimiento.

Family Health Centers está construyendo un edificio de 48,000 pies cuadrados en 5454 El Cajon Blvd, a menos de una milla de la clínica de 5,000 pies cuadrados que ocupa en la actualidad. Se espera que el nuevo edificio esté terminado a principios del 2012.

“El nuevo edificio incluirá una clínica integral mucho más grande. Ofreceremos servicios dentales, cuidados y manejo de casos de HIV y aumentaremos la capacidad de nuestros servicios actuales, tales como pediatría, salud mental y atención de enfermedades crónicas”, dijo Jennette Lawrence Shay, Directora de Relaciones Gubernamentales y Comunitarias de Family Health Centers.

“Cada vez más personas están necesitando nuestros servicios. Necesitábamos un edificio más grande para aumentar la cantidad de doctores y personal de apoyo del centro y poder satisfacer estas necesidades”.

Entretanto, San Diego Family Care está analizando cómo expandir sus servicios incrementando el horario de atención nocturna de la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City y están explorando otras ubicaciones, de acuerdo a Aaron Zaheer, Director Médico de Pediatría de la organización.

Debido a la prolongada recesión económica, los proveedores de servicios de salud sin fines de lucro están atendiendo un gran número de pacientes nuevos que se han quedado sin trabajo o sin seguro médico. “Estamos viendo un gran aumento en la demanda de nuestros servicios como parte de la red de seguridad de nuestros pacientes”, dijo Zaheer.

Zaheer también cree que con la reforma federal de salud, cada vez más pacientes buscarán centros de atención

primaria y acudirán a las clínicas comunitarias. En la actualidad, dijo, muchos de los pacientes con derecho a recibir cuidados de salud subvencionados por el gobierno solo acuden a la clínica en caso de extrema urgencia. En el futuro, espera que cada vez más pacientes aprovechen el cuidado preventivo.

Cooperar en lugar de Competir

A pesar de que los proveedores de servicios de salud sin fines de lucro de City Heights están ubicados en un área relativamente pequeña, cooperan los unos con los otros en lugar de tratar de competir. Sus servicios y horarios tienden a complementarse.

Por ejemplo, la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City - Pediatría y Centro de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady Children’s comparten el mismo espacio en 4305 University Ave. La Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City opera durante el día y Rady’s provee cuidados de urgencia hasta altas horas de la noche. A través de Rady’s, los pacientes de la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City tienen acceso a servicios de radiología.

Las clínicas dentales de La Maestra están ubicadas en el mismo edificio que el Centro de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady’s y la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City - Pediatría. Como resultado, la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City ha sido designada por el gobierno federal como un centro de que provee servicios integrales de salud a las poblaciones marginadas.

Katherine Konzen, Directora de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady’s, dijo que la cooperación entre Rady’s y la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City ha sido muy exitosa. “Las instalaciones se usan a lo largo de todo el día. Los pacientes tienen acceso a una variedad de servicios desde las 8 a.m. hasta las 10 p.m.”

Comprometidos con Proveer Servicios Culturalmente Competentes
 Algo que estos proveedores de servi-

City Heights Family Health Center, 5379 El Cajon Blvd.,
 (619) 515-2400

La Maestra Community Health Centers, Main Medical Clinic, 4060 Fairmount Ave.,
 (619) 280-4213

La Maestra Pediatrics, 4060 Fairmount Ave., (619) 280-4213

La Maestra Women’s Clinic, 4060 Fairmount Ave., (619) 280-7072

La Maestra Behavioral Health Services - Family Wellness, 4060 Fairmount Ave.,
 (619) 564-8765

La Maestra Optometry, 4060 Fairmount Ave.,
 (619) 280-4213 ext: 3803

La Maestra Community Pharmacy, 4060 Fairmount Ave.,
 (619) 564-7013

La Maestra Dental Clinic #1, 4305 University Ave., Ste. 150,
 (619) 501-1235

La Maestra Dental Clinic #2, 4305 University Ave., Ste. 120,
 (619) 285-8135

Mid-City Community Clinic - Pediatrics, 4305 University Ave.,
 (619) 280-2058

Mid-City Community Clinic - Adults, 4290 Polk Ave.,
 (619) 563-0250

Rady Children’s Urgent Care Center, 4305 University Ave., Ste. 150, (619) 280-2905

East African Healthcare Reform Roundtable seeks to share knowledge

By Adam Ward
Mid-City CAN

Explaining health care reform, which entails deciphering complicated timelines, legalese and technical medical terms, can be daunting even for native English speakers. Members of the East African Healthcare Reform Roundtable are attempting to do all that and overcome language and cultural barriers for immigrants whose traditions focus on oral, rather than written, means of communications.

Group members include representatives from Horn of Africa Community in North America, Somali Youth United, Huda Community Center, Somali Family

Service of San Diego, Nile Sisters Development Initiative, Southern Sudanese Community Center of San Diego, South Sudan Christian Youth and Community Organization and the Center for Bridging Communities.

Funded by The California Endowment as part of its Building Healthy Communities initiative, the roundtable is intended to help the East African community understand federal health care reform. The group has been meeting once a month since January and is still in the strategic planning stage. Facilitators are helping leaders collaborate and increase their knowledge.

"It is a very complex issue even for health care workers," said Yamin Hamud, executive director

of the Center for Bridging Communities. She is on the governing body of the Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, also known as Mid-City CAN, which coordinates the partnerships for the roundtable.

"The idea is to bring together this group of thought leaders in the community to learn as much as they can, so they can turn around and share this information," said Lenore Lowe, executive director of Nonprofit Management Solutions, which is facilitating and advising the group.

The roundtable is creating a shared vision and action plan for community outreach and advocacy. "The areas of focus includes sharing knowledge about health care reform and medical rights and increasing the ability for leaders in

the East African communities to work collaboratively," Lowe said.

Hamud gave an example of what these efforts might look like in City Heights. "The average Somali person that I represent in my community [might not be] able to read these articles about the reform," she said. "We as community leaders can sort of break it down for them in a language they can understand and in a format that will be useful."

Hamud said leaders of the East African community in City Heights will be able to talk about parts of the legislation that are most likely to have the biggest impact. "[Community members] might not even understand that, for years and years and years, their adult children who lived with them couldn't get insur-

ance, well, now they can," she said. Hamud anticipates doing one-on-one outreach to people as well as larger trainings.

Meanwhile, the roundtable is looking at some unique strategies to disseminate information. "When you're talking about translation, that doesn't necessarily mean written translation, but oral translation that can be recorded and provided, because there is an oral tradition in the Somali and Sudanese community," Lowe said.

— Adam Ward is the Mid-City CAN staff writer and a former San Diego Union-Tribune editor. Adam has lived in San Diego for nearly a decade and is the father of a young son. Contact him at award@midcitycan.org or (619) 283-9624 ext. 210.

Grants enable La Maestra to expand medical and dental health services to more schools

New mobile clinic to be added

By Lindy Webb
La Maestra Community Health Centers

Thanks to a \$406,733 grant awarded under the federal Affordable Care Act, La Maestra Community Health Centers will expand medical and dental services to schools in City Heights and elsewhere in San Diego County.

The funding will allow La Maestra to purchase a new mobile clinic to provide medical, dental and other health and well-being services to about 9,000 more elementary and middle school students. The 40-foot mobile clinic will feature two dental chairs and one exam room.

The van will provide substantial savings for families because they will no longer need to miss work and school to drive to a clinic. La Maestra will save money as well because it won't have to shoulder the costs associated with building a permanent clinic on a campus.

"This new mobile clinic will allow us to effectively increase access to preventive care and treatment for so many students and families who aren't able to see the doctor otherwise, and the children won't have to miss school," said Zara Marselian, La Maestra's chief executive officer.

La Maestra, which has been serving City Heights for more than two decades, established its first school-based health center when it took over the clinic at Hoover High School in 2009. Ever since then, it's been working to expand services to more schools. Last year, through funding from its community partners, The California Endowment and Price Charities, the nonprofit health provider opened a second school-based



Above: La Maestra opened its first school-based clinic at Hoover High School in 2009. It has since expanded to more schools, including Central Elementary pictured here. Right: Zara Marselian is the chief executive officer of La Maestra Community Health Centers headquartered in City Heights. Photos courtesy of La Maestra

clinic at Central Elementary School. Plans for additional on-campus clinics in City Heights are underway.

Students and their families around the country rely on school-based health centers like La Maestra's to meet their needs for a full range of age-appropriate health services. La Maestra's school-based programs offer wellness exams; screening for lead, tuberculosis, high cholesterol, high blood sugar and anemia; treatment for acute illnesses, such as the flu, and chronic conditions, including asthma and diabetes; oral health

exams, dental X-rays and treatment, and oral hygiene education. Vision, hearing and mental health screenings and referrals are also available.

For 21 years, La Maestra has provided disease prevention, treatment, chronic disease management, and essential support services to more than 155,000 men, women and children in City Heights, National City, Lemon Grove and El Cajon.

— Lindy Webb is the executive assistant at La Maestra Community Health Centers.



Family Health Centers de San Diego está construyendo un edificio de 48,000 pies cuadrados en 5454 El Cajon Blvd para satisfacer la creciente demanda de la comunidad. El edificio reemplazará al Centro de Salud Familiar de City Heights que es mucho más pequeño. Foto cortesía de Family Health Centers

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cios de salud sin fines de lucro tienen en común es que están comprometidos con asegurar que sus servicios sean adecuados para las diversas necesidades de sus pacientes. Todos los proveedores tratan de contratar personal que hable diversos idiomas además de inglés, idiomas como español, somalí y vietnamita. Algunos de los proveedores ofrecen servicios de interpretación telefónica cuando el paciente habla algún idioma que el personal no puede entender.

Zara Marselian, Directora Ejecutiva de La Maestra, dijo que si su organización no puede encontrar personal que hable todos los idiomas que se hablan en la comunidad, reclutará a miembros de la comunidad que los hablen y los entrenará como asistentes médicos. La Maestra cuenta con un modelo a través del cual entrena a embajadores de la comunidad para que actúen como enlace cultural y para que puedan proveer información acerca de cuidados de salud y a la vez informarle al centro qué pueden hacer para mejorar sus servicios y poder llegar a grupos étnicos específicos.

"Sabemos que la única forma de ser culturalmente competentes es contratando personas que pertenezcan a la comunidad dentro de la cual ofrecemos nuestros servicios", dijo Marselian.

Ofreciendo Servicios de Calidad a un Precio Asequible

Todos los proveedores sin fines de lucro ayudan a los pacientes que no tienen seguro médico a aplicar en los programas de salud del gobierno. Si una persona no califica para el cuidado subvencionado, se le ofrece tarifas más bajas en base a sus ingresos y el tamaño de su familia. Como regla general, las clínicas comunitarias no le niegan sus servicios a nadie.

"Nuestra misión es proveer servicios asequibles de alta calidad a todo el que lo necesite. Tomamos nuestra misión muy seriamente," dijo Shay.

Como no todos los pacientes pueden pagar, los proveedores deben complementar su presupuesto a través de donativos y fondos públicos y privados además de actividades de recaudación de fondos.

Student Spotlight

For Julian Lopez, hard work equals success

By Ashley Quintero
Hoover High School

As he enters his last year of high school, Hoover senior Julian Lopez maintains a sharp focus on both sports and academics. He prepared himself for the upcoming year with one goal in mind: attending college.

Julian has always been a strong student. During his years at Monroe Clark Middle School, academics was his priority, and he became one of the top students in his class. Not only did he excel in his classes, he was also interested in athletics. He brought the same commitment and drive to Hoover, where he ended his freshman year with a 3.8 GPA and started his first year playing football. He trained during the summer with the team and did extra training on his own. He faced a major setback when the doctor said that he was not fit enough to play football. He took that as a challenge and pushed himself harder. Julian also participated in track and field and became a top hurdler.

During his sophomore year, Julian was recruited to the varsity football team and raised his GPA to 4.5, earning him a spot in the top 10 in his class. "It is a privilege to be in the top 10," Julian said. "Just because you have a top GPA doesn't mean you're smart but a hard worker."

In his junior year, he was injured during football season. While others pushed him to get back on his feet, he felt like stopping because of the pressure from his peers and teachers. "It made me feel like everything that I was doing was just because other people wanted me to do it," Julian said.

His motivation was not the same, but he did all he could to get back on his feet. He quit track and field and then managed to come back by apologizing and discussing his future with his coach. His junior year was not what he expected. It was a challenge managing time to study, do school work and play sports. He put his all into every football game and track meet.

He has been involved in football and track and field all through the past three years and plans on doing the same this year.

Not only have his peers noticed how good he has become but colleges have as well. Lopez has been receiving letters of recruitment from the Air Force and multiple colleges. Recruiters from the University of San Diego, University of California, Davis, UC Riverside, UCLA, and Harvard University have all approached him in person.

Although he has some time to think about where he will go, he already has his mind set on one particular university: Harvard. This is his dream school. He will continue to work hard to reach his college goal.

This year he has more on his plate, as he juggles academics, sports, and a job to help his family. He also feels like the man of the house because his father is not there.

Although Julian has a portfolio full of medals, awards, and letters of recognition and recruitment, he remains humble and is doing everything to make his mother proud. His senior year is challenging, and he won't forget where he stood before and where he is now. Both his family and peers support him in every way.



*Ashley Quintero, class of 2012, is
the editor in chief of The Cardinal at
Hoover High School.*



Student ambassadors, Rudy Vargas, Carolina Barraza and Tram Nguyen, led activities at the annual Bubble Up! gala to engage guests and help with the fundraiser.

Bubble Up! gala raises funds to support City Heights programs

By Elizabeth Horpedahl
Ocean Discovery Institute

With City Heights students at the helm, Ocean Discovery Institute celebrated its accomplishments and plans for growth at its annual Bubble Up! gala on Sept. 17. The black-tie affair at La Costa Resort and Spa raised critical funding to support programs in City Heights.

Guests participated in student-led activities, competing to win prizes while raising funds to empower City Heights youth. Hoover High School alumni, including Rudy Vargas and Anai Novoa, led the activities to engage guests in the Institute's mission and programs. Activities included remotely-operated Vehicle races, "plankton" races, and an "Are you Smarter than an Ocean Leader?" game show.

More than 250 leaders from San Diego's business, philanthropic, and scientific communities attended. Student ambassadors sat at each table with supporters, simultaneously gaining networking skills

and connecting with potential internship opportunities. Erick Ruiz was one of these student ambassadors, sitting with supporters from Bumble Bee Foods. Through this event, Erick was able to share his dream of combining his interest in fisheries science with his passion for the culinary arts, and discuss ways that he can pursue that dream.

"With each new year, it is a thrill to see all the growth and dimension in the students. To cross paths with so many wonderful, compassionate and generous people brings a whole new meaning to community," said City Heights resident Dennis Wood who attended the gala.

Perhaps the most exciting part of Bubble Up! was that Carolina Barraza, Cal State University Chico and Hoover High alum, was recently hired as Ocean Discovery Institute's events and communications coordinator, implementing the event for the first time this year.

"I was thrilled to be a part of this event to share our organization's vision and long-term commitment to improving our region," Carolina said.

The funds raised at Bubble Up! will support activities and programs that pave the way for more than 5,000 youth from City Heights to gain knowledge and understanding of the sciences and nature, preparing these young people to become our future scientific and environmental leaders.

The gala fundraiser was made possible by the title sponsor Gen-Probe. Other supporters include Boeing; Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves and Savitch; Cox Communications; Hughes Marino; Wells Fargo; Bank of America; Life Technologies; Qualcomm; SDG&E; ProFlowers; and Fresh & Easy.

— Elizabeth Horpedahl is the director of development and communications for the Ocean Discovery Institute.

*To learn more about the Ocean
Discovery Institute, visit
www.OceanDiscoveryInstitute.org
or call (858) 488-3849.*

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Discussion on school closures and realignments underway

In anticipation of further state budget cuts, the San Diego Unified School District is studying the possibility of closing some schools in ten of its 16 high school clusters, including the Hoover and Crawford clusters in City Heights. A cluster consists of elementary and middle schools that feed into a high school.

District staff has held a series of community meetings throughout September to inform parents about the potential changes, which could include grade-level reconfigurations and program consolidations, in addition to campus closures. As part of the adoption of this school year's budget, the district has committed to saving \$5 million through school realignments in the 2012-2013 school year.

Additional community meetings are scheduled in October. To learn more, visit www.sandi.net/realignment.

Campaign aims to recruit 4,500 volunteers for local schools

United Way of San Diego County, the San Diego County Office of Education, and the San Diego Union-Tribune have joined together for a campaign to recruit 4,500 volunteers to tutor, mentor, and support local students at a time when schools are grappling with severe budget cuts.

The campaign was announced on Sept. 15, and it's part of a national effort by United Way get one million people throughout the country to volunteer in schools. United Way and the Union-Tribune will track the local volunteer efforts to determine their impact.

To speak with a volunteer coordinator, call (858) 636-4111.

New dialogue has begun to improve services for East Africans

A recent conference sponsored by City Heights Hope, Voices of Women and the United Women of East Africa Support Team sparked a new dialogue between San Diego's East African community, local agencies and educators on how to best serve East African families.

Agin Shaheed, a program manager in the Race, Human Relations and Advocacy Department of the San Diego Unified School District, was part of a panel discussion on how to provide better advocacy for children and adults in a culturally diverse community. In addition, Shaheed gave a motivational speech to participating students on how to become responsible citizens and shared information about the contributions of East Africans to American culture.

Participants are working to improve the overall health and well-being of East African families living in San Diego. For more information, contact Shaheed at (858) 490-8678.

Hoover moves from Beiser's school board subdistrict to Barrera's

Under a redistricting plan approved by the San Diego School Board on Sept. 13, Hoover High School has moved from subdistrict B represented by Kevin Beiser to subdistrict D represented by Richard Barrera.

Electoral maps are redrawn every ten years after new census data is released. The goal of redistricting is to balance populations between political districts to ensure equal representation.

The total population in the school district is a little more than one million people, and the voting-age population is 80 percent of the general population. About 200,000 people reside in each of the five school board subdistricts.

In subdistrict D, 45.22 percent of the population is Hispanic, 37.76 percent non-Hispanic white, and 7.9 percent black, with the remainder made up of a mix of races.



THE AJA PROJECT

Refugee youth *from Crawford High School are participating in an arts-based workshop on Food Justice that is being run by The AJA Project as part of the media collaborative, Speak City Heights. Youth explored the New Roots community garden in City Heights. Their photos and stories revealed that not only do gardens help ensure access to healthy food, but also improve mental health by providing refugees with a sense of community and connection, helping to alleviate acculturation stress and depression. The students also noted that mostly refugees use the gardens. They think most people in City Heights believe the gardens are only available for refugees.*



For the above assignment, youth photographed their City Heights neighborhood and created a photo map illustrating the options for healthy and non-healthy foods. They unanimously agreed that there are many places in City Heights to get healthy, cheap food. They considered themselves to be healthy, but felt that City Heights, as a whole, is unhealthy. Their visual narratives raised the question: Do refugees have more access to healthy, cheap food than other City Heights residents?

Crawford students photographed their cultural food practices, illuminating the link between culture, access and education around healthy eating. Many youth from Southeast Asia described a plant-based diet that they have been able to easily continue in the United States through local community gardens and farmers markets. Many refugees arrive in the United States with the tools and education for healthy eating.

Prepare, plan, stay informed

Three strategies on how to prepare for emergencies

By Yvette Urea Moe

San Diego County Office of
Emergency Services

If City Heights residents were polled and asked how well they were prepared to cope with the recent power outage, many would likely answer “not very well.” A December survey of 503 San Diego County residents, sponsored by the local American Red Cross, found that a 41 percent are completely unprepared for an emergency.

The massive blackout in early September that affected more than three million residents in San Diego and elsewhere serves as a wake-up call to get ready. In a major disaster, emergency officials won’t be able to reach everyone immediately. It could be days before first responders are able to assist. In the event of a fast-moving wildfire or explosion, residents might be given 15 minutes or less to evacuate their homes.

By following the three strategies outlined below, you will be in a better position to respond to any emergency:

• **Prepare.** Gather items for a home, work and car emergency kit. At minimum, you will need a three-day supply of water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, a whistle, a radio, a flashlight and batteries. The items should be stored in a ready-to-grab waterproof bag or container, such as a plastic tub.

Pre-packaged emergency kits are available at some big box stores and the American Red Cross, but residents also can put together their own. Personalize the kits for your family by considering the dietary needs of infants, pets and other family members. If anyone in your family requires medication, put an extra week’s supply in the kits. Keep copies of important documents, such as insurance policies, identification cards, and bank records, in case you have to evacuate quickly. You can scan and store them online or on a thumb drive. Do the same with family photographs.

• **Plan.** A disaster could happen while parents are at work and children at school. During the blackout, we learned that phone lines can quickly get overloaded, so it’s important to have a family disaster plan that includes several meeting places and an out-of-state emergency contact that family members can call or text-message. Text messaging is often an easier way to communicate during a disaster.

Create a family disaster plan with important phone numbers and information you may need in an emergency. Plan templates are available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese on www.ReadySanDiego.org. If you already have a plan, review it, make sure it’s up to date and practice it.

• **Stay informed.** The County of San Diego offers free emergency alerts by cell phone. To register, go to www.ReadySanDiego.org and click on AlertSanDiego. During an emergency, the county also will activate a special website, www.SDCountyEmergency.com, and send out information via two Twitter accounts - @ReadySanDiego and @SanDiegoCounty.

If power is out, use your battery-powered radio to get updates from KOGO 600 AM or XTRA Sports 1360 AM. You can also dial 211 for emergency updates and service referrals.

During the blackout, many of us found that we lacked batteries, a supply of food or water, flashlights, gas in our car, or cash on hand. If you haven’t already, take the time now to get what you were missing, so you’ll be ready the next time to survive an emergency.

— *Yvette Urea Moe is a communications specialist at the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services, which coordinates the region’s overall response to disasters.*

Recent City Heights brush fire is reminder to create defensible space

By Lee Swanson

San Diego Fire-Rescue
Department

The Aug. 29 brush fire in Manzanita Canyon threatened homes in City Heights and called attention to the need to create defensible space and a fire-safe landscape at properties facing the canyon.

A fire-safe landscape isn’t necessarily the same thing as a well-manicured yard. It means using fire-resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire.

The good news is you don’t need a lot of money to make your landscape fire-safe. And you will find that a fire-safe landscape can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home.

Defensible space is the base around your home that will give firefighters time to arrive and space to fight the fire. To create such a space requires clearing all dry grass and dead leaves and selectively thinning, trimming and pruning the native vegetation to a maximum of 100 feet from your home. None of this means you should have a ring of bare dirt or disturb any of the root systems around your home.

Defensible space is the landscape between your house and the dense stands of native or naturalized vegetation that could be a source of fuel for a fire. It is your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain this area to reduce fire risk.

The first approximately 35 feet from the house is the level area that should have permanent irrigation and low-growing plants (with the exception of trees). The next 65 feet cannot have permanent irrigation and must be thinned and pruned on an



To create a defensible space, clear all dry grass and dead leaves and selectively trim the native vegetation to a maximum of 100 feet from your home.

annual basis.

Here are some tips on how best to create defensible space:

Remove dead wood and vegetation and cut half the plants that are more than two feet tall down to six inches. Don’t go below six inches or you will lose erosion control. The plants you cut to six inches should be in groups, so there are two-foot plants in an area, surrounded by lower plants in a mosaic pattern. The goal is to thin the plants, not eliminate them.

The remaining plants, four feet or more in height, should then be cut and shaped into umbrellas. Prune half of the lower branches to create umbrella-shaped canopies. This also allows you to see and deal with what is growing underneath.

Finally, remove all the cuttings and

dead wood from your property or use a machine to chip or mulch your cuttings and spread them out to a depth of four to five inches.

— *Lee Swanson is a public information officer for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.*

To learn more about reducing fire risk and creating defensible space, visit the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department website at www.sandiego.gov/fireandems/inspections/brush.shtml.

Tres Estrategias Fáciles para estar Preparado durante una Emergencia

Por Yvette Urea Moe

San Diego County Office of
Emergency Services

Si le preguntamos a los residentes de City Heights si estaban bien preparados cuando ocurrió el reciente apagón, muchos probablemente contestarían: “no muy bien”. Una encuesta realizada entre 503 residentes del Condado de San Diego en el mes de diciembre patrocinada por la Cruz Roja Americana demostró que el 41% no está preparado en lo más mínimo para una emergencia.

Tenemos que tomar el apagón masivo que ocurrió a principios de septiembre y que afectó a más de tres millones de residentes de San Diego y otras áreas como un llamado de atención para prepararnos en caso de emergencia. En un desastre mayor, los servicios de rescate no tendrán la capacidad de ayudar a todos inmediatamente. Pueden pasar días antes de que los rescatistas puedan ayudarlo. En caso de un incendio forestal o una explosión,

los residentes tienen menos de 15 minutos para evacuar sus casas.

Si sigue las tres estrategias que aparecen a continuación, estará mejor preparado para hacerle frente a una emergencia:

• **Prepárese.** Reúna los elementos necesarios para armar kits de emergencia para su casa, trabajo y automóvil. Necesitará como mínimo una provisión de agua y alimentos no perecederos para tres días, botiquín de primeros auxilios, silbato, radio, linterna y baterías. Debe almacenar estos artículos en una bolsa o envase a prueba de agua que sea de fácil acceso tal como un recipiente de plástico.

Existen kits de emergencia listos para comprar en algunas tiendas y a través de la Cruz Roja Americana, pero los residentes pueden armar sus propios kits. Personalícelos para su familia tomando en cuenta las necesidades de los niños pequeños, mascotas y demás miembros de la familia. Si algún familiar necesita algún medicamento, incluya la cantidad

necesaria para una semana en los kits. Tenga copias de todos sus documentos importantes, como por ejemplo: pólizas de seguro, tarjetas de identificación y estados de cuenta bancarios por si tiene que evacuar apresuradamente. Puede escanearlos y almacenarlos en el internet o en algún dispositivo removible. Haga lo mismo con sus fotografías familiares.

• **Planifique.** Los desastres pueden ocurrir en cualquier momento, mientras los padres están en el trabajo y los hijos están en la escuela. Durante el apagón, nos dimos cuenta que las líneas de teléfono se pueden saturar rápidamente y es importante tener un plan familiar de emergencia que incluya varios puntos de reunión y la información de alguna persona que viva fuera del estado a quien los miembros de la familia pueden llamar o enviar mensajes de texto. Los mensajes de

Nguy hiểm của hút thuốc gián tiếp và nhiều căn nhà ở

By Manuel Andrade
and Mary Baum
Social Advocates for Youth

Bạn có biết rằng hút thuốc và hút thuốc gián tiếp (Secondhand Smoke - SHS) chịu trách nhiệm cho cái chết nhiều hơn tội phạm bạo lực, tai nạn xe hơi, HIV, béo phì và các bệnh chủ yếu phổi hợp? Tại California, ước tính một năm có khoảng 3.600 người tử vong từ bệnh tim và 400 người chết vì ung thư phổi gây ra từ SHS. SHS là khói thuốc lá mà người hút thuốc thở ra và điều thuốc sau khi được châm lửa.

California Air Resources Board của tiểu bang California đã xác định được khói thuốc lá như là một chất gây ô nhiễm không khí độc hại. Nhà nước Environmental Protection Agency đã phân loại khói thuốc lá như là một nhóm A gây ung thư, chất gây ung thư nguy hiểm bậc nhất. 50 hóa chất được biết là gây ra ung thư đã được xác định trong SHS.

Tháng 12 năm 2010 nghiên cứu của American Academy of Pediatrics phát hiện ra rằng trẻ em sống trong các căn hộ mà không có ai hút thuốc lá bên trong có một sự gia tăng 45% trong các mức độ cotinin (để đo tiếp xúc với thuốc lá). Báo cáo của tiểu bang nói rằng nhà ở của nhiều gia đình có thể là một nguồn đáng quan trọng của việc hút thuốc gián tiếp

cho trẻ em, các cấp liên đới với bệnh tật.

Căn hộ cho thuê của Hạt San Diego có hơn 500 nghìn đơn vị, có vấn đề? Hút thuốc gián tiếp có thể di chuyển trong và ngoài của các cửa sổ và cửa ra vào mở, thông qua các hệ thống thông gió, tường, khoảng cách nào hoặc không gian, và xung quanh hệ thống dây điện, thiết bị chiếu sáng và hệ thống ống nước.

Một vấn đề quan trọng là các đám cháy gây ra bởi thuốc lá. Từ năm 2005 đến năm 2009 Sở Cứu Hỏa San Diego báo cáo trung bình là 15 vụ cháy một năm. Năm 2011, sáu người đã chết từ các vụ cháy gây ra bởi thuốc lá còn đang cháy âm ỉ ở Hạt San Diego.

Những gì bạn có thể làm nếu quý vị và gia đình của bạn đang được tiếp xúc với khói thuốc lá?

Đầu tiên, giải quyết các vấn đề với hàng xóm của bạn một cách thân thiện, giải thích SHS khói đang bước vào căn hộ của bạn và làm thế nào nó ảnh hưởng đến bạn và gia đình của bạn. Hỏi người hút thuốc những gì anh ta hoặc cô ấy nghĩ rằng sẽ là cách tốt nhất để giải quyết vấn đề. Nếu điều đó không hiệu quả sau đó hãy nói chuyện với bạn hàng xóm, tìm hiểu những người khác đang bị làm phiền bởi khói thuốc lá, hãy liên hệ với bác sĩ của bạn và yêu cầu một lá thư giải thích vấn đề sức khỏe / khuyết tật của bạn và tại sao bạn cần được bảo vệ khỏi khói

thuốc. Một khi bạn có thư của mình và hàng xóm thì hãy cùng nhau liên hệ với chủ nhà của bạn để tìm ra các giải pháp.

Bạn có cần giúp không? Cộng Đồng City Heights và Dự Án San Diego Không Khói Thuốc đang làm việc với Thanh Pho San Diego để tạo ra một pháp lệnh phiến toái để bảo vệ bạn, dự án sẽ hướng dẫn bạn làm thế nào bạn có thể ủng hộ cho một chính sách không khói thuốc trong khu nhà ở của bạn, chúng tôi cũng hỗ trợ chủ nhà về việc làm thế nào họ có thể giải quyết một cách tự nguyện. Để biết thêm thông tin hoặc nếu cần sự giúp đỡ bỏ hút thuốc, xin vui lòng gọi cho chúng tôi tại 619-283-9624 ext. 215.

Hãy nhớ rằng, nếu bạn hút thuốc hãy chắc chắn rằng bạn không hút thuốc gần những người khác, hãy chắc chắn nơi bỏ tàn thuốc lá của bạn và xin vui lòng không hút thuốc bên trong căn hộ của bạn hoặc gần với người than của bạn, nhả khói bên ngoài nơi mà nó sẽ không làm phiền người khác. Cảm ơn bạn đã bảo vệ gia đình và hàng xóm của bạn từ các đám cháy và khói thuốc lá!

— **Manuel Andrade and Mary Baum work for the San Diego Smoke-Free Project at Social Advocates for Youth, also known as SAY San Diego. The nonprofit organization has been in existence since 1971. This article is translated into Vietnamese by Mark Tran.**

Vivienda multifamiliar y peligros del humo de segunda mano

Por Manuel Andrade
and Mary Baum
Social Advocates for Youth

¿Sabía Usted que en E.U. el humo de segunda mano o humo pasivo, es responsable por más muertes en crímenes violentos, accidentes automovilísticos, HIV, obesidad y otras enfermedades en conjunto? En California, aproximadamente 3,600 personas mueren al año por enfermedades del corazón y 400 mueren de cáncer de pulmón a causa del humo pasivo. ¿Qué es el humo de segunda mano? Es el humo que el fumador exhala y la combustión que se crea cuando un cigarrillo se enciende.

El Consejo de Recursos del Aire del Estado de California identifica al humo de segunda mano como “un toxico contaminante del medio ambiente”. La Agencia de Protección Ambiental de los Estados Unidos ha clasificado al humo de segunda mano como un carcinógeno del grupo “A”, categoría de carcinógenos más peligrosos. Estudios han identificado 50 sustancias químicas que causan cáncer en el humo de segunda mano.

Un estudio realizado por la Academia de Pediatría en el 2010, se encontró que niños que viven en apartamentos donde nadie fuma adentro tuvo un

incremento de 45% en niveles de cotinina (sistema para medir la exposición al tabaco). El informe señala que las viviendas multifamiliares pueden ser una fuente importante de exposición al humo de segunda mano para los niños a niveles asociados con la morbilidad.

Las viviendas multifamiliares en el Condado de San Diego tienen más de 500 mil unidades, ¿cuál es el problema? que el humo pasivo se filtra por puertas, ventanas, sistemas de ventilación compartidos, paredes, cualquier espacio vacío y plomería

Otra cuestión importante son incendios causados por cigarrillos. Del 2005 al 2009, el Departamento de Bomberos de San Diego, reporto un promedio de 15 incendios al año. En el Condado de San Diego, de enero a septiembre del 2011, seis personas han muerto en incendios causados por los cigarros.

¿Qué pueden hacer tú y tu familia para evitar ser expuestos al humo de segunda mano?

Primero, hable cordialmente con su vecino y explíquele como el humo entra en su departamento y cómo está afectando a usted y a su familia. Pregunte al fumador que es lo que piensa y cuál sería la solución al problema. Si esto no funciona hable con sus vecinos y

pregunte quien mas esta siendo afectado por el humo. También, pida a su médico una carta explicando su condición de salud o discapacidad y la razón por la que no debe ser expuesto al humo pasivo. Con apoyo de vecinos haga una cita con el administrador del edificio para explorar posibles soluciones.

¿Necesita ayuda? El Proyecto San Diego Libre de Humo trabaja con la Ciudad de San Diego para crear una ley para protegerlo, también le indicará como abogar para adoptar una política libre de humo en su complejo de departamentos; además podemos asistir a gerentes en la adopción de políticas. Para más información o si necesita ayuda para dejar de fumar llámenos al 619-283-9624 Ext. 215.

Recuerda, si fumas asegúrate de no fumar cerca de la gente, cerciórese de apagar bien el cigarrillo, no fume adentro de su casa/apartamento o cerca de su familia. ¡Gracias por proteger a su familia de incendios y humo de segunda mano!

— **Manuel Andrade and Mary Baum work for the San Diego Smoke-Free Project at Social Advocates for Youth, also known as SAY San Diego. The nonprofit organization has been in existence since 1971.**

EMERGENCY, from P1

Connect-ED and school safety plans

The San Diego Unified School District uses a service called Connect-ED to send out voice messages and emails en masse to parents and guardians to notify them of emergencies and school events.

Check with your child's school to make sure your current contact information is in the Connect-ED system. To learn more about Connect-ED, visit www.sandi.net/Page/2998.

By law, every California campus must have a school safety plan. Ask to review a copy of the plan. Standard procedures require school staff to stay until all children are safety reunited with parents or designated adults whose names are on their emergency cards. Make sure your child's emergency card information is up to date.

American Red Cross, San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter

The local American Red Cross offers two types of disaster assistance. One type involves providing material items, which include food, shelter, cleanup kits and financial help. The second type involves counseling, guidance and advocacy. The organization also trains volunteers for disaster response. To learn more, visit www.sdarc.org.

In addition, the local chapter has teamed up with corporate partners to create www.PrepareSanDiego.org, which contains emergency-specific checklists in English and Spanish.

2-1-1 San Diego

During a disaster or emergency, 2-1-1 San Diego provides information about road closures, shelter locations and recovery assistance. Residents can either dial 211 or visit www.211sandiego.org for help 24/7. 2-1-1 San Diego offers referrals in multiple languages.

To receive updates, sign up for the agency's email list online.

Remember it is your responsibility to create a disaster plan and that having such a plan can make a dramatic difference in how well you and your loved ones survive unforeseen situations.

EMERGENCIA, from P8

texto usualmente son la forma más fácil de comunicación durante una emergencia.

Tenga un plan familiar de emergencia e incluya números de teléfono importantes e información que puede ser útil en caso de emergencia. Puede encontrar formatos para su plan en inglés, español, tagalog y vietnamita visitando www.readysandiego.org. Si ya tiene un plan, revíselo para asegurarse de que sea apropiado y práctico.

• **Manténgase informado.** El Condado de San Diego ofrece el servicio gratuito de alerta telefónica en caso de emergencias. Para inscribirse, visite <http://www.readysandiego.org> y oprima donde dice AlertSanDiego. En caso de emergencia, el condado también activará el sitio web especial <http://www.sdcountyemergency.com> y publicará información a través de dos cuentas de Twitter — @ReadySanDiego y @SanDiegoCounty.

Si no hay electricidad, sintonice su radio a baterías a KOGO 600 AM o XTRA Sports 1360 AM. También puede llamar al 211 para obtener información actualizada de emergencia y referencias para servicios de urgencia.

Durante el apagón, muchos nos dimos cuenta que no teníamos baterías, agua o comida, linternas, gasolina para nuestro coche o dinero en efectivo. Si no lo ha hecho aún, consiga los artículos que no tenía a mano para que pueda sobrevivir a una emergencia.

— **Yvette Urea Moe es especialista en comunicaciones de la Oficina de Servicios de Emergencia del Condado de San Diego, esta oficina coordina las actividades generales en la región en casos de desastre.**

Iraqi immigrant creates jobs, brings fresh produce to the neighborhood

How did an Iraqi-born Catholic come to own a Latino supermarket with an Irish name? It's a long story but well worth hearing.

Mark Kassab, co-owner of Murphy's Market, was born and raised in Iraq. He immigrated to San Diego in 1977 with his two brothers to join his mother and sister. The Kassabs had a long history in Iraq, tracing their ancestry to 500 B.C. and the Babylonian empire, which included present-day Iraq. The Kassabs are Chaldean Catholics and speak Aramaic, which Mark says is more similar to Hebrew than Arabic, Iraq's predominant language.

After settling in the San Carlos neighborhood of San Diego as a 17-year-old, Mark attended Patrick Henry High School and worked at a grocery store. He says his family was poor, but together with his two oldest siblings, he committed to pooling money to buy a supermarket in the future. Saving money wasn't easy, as Mark remembers making only \$2 per hour even though minimum wage was \$2.75 (His manager said his English wasn't good enough to justify paying him the extra \$.75 per hour).

Not long after graduating from high school, Mark heard through a friend that Murphy's Market on Fairmount Avenue was for sale. Supposedly, Murphy's was founded by an Irish descendant in the 1960's, hence the Irish name.

Along with his older sister and younger

brother, Mark leveraged the money they had saved working at local grocery stores to borrow money from the bank to buy Murphy's. At the youthful age of 20, three years removed from landing in the United States with \$5 in his pocket, Mark was the proud co-owner of a business.

"We worked really hard – more than 100 hours a week – to be successful. We had no other choice," Mark says. The early years were really lean for the three siblings, and they all continued to live at home. To raise extra money for operations, Mark took a second job at a Pacific Beach liquor store. He remembers working at Murphy's from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the liquor store from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and returning to Murphy's for a couple of hours to stock shelves for the next day.

Asked if it was all worth it, Mark replies, "You learned not to complain. You take care of your family... It was better than being unemployed."

The Kassabs learned to be savvy businesspeople and adapt to their changing environment. Murphy's customer demographics changed drastically from the early '80s to the '90s as City Heights experienced a large influx of Latinos. They did a lot of listening to their customers' wants and needs and changed merchandise to stay current.

In time the Kassabs decided they would need to expand operations to meet growing demand. The original store was



Murphy's Market on Fairmount Avenue

just 1,800 square feet with six parking spaces and one employee, in addition to the Kassabs. In 2009, the time was right to purchase an adjacent lot and build a new 9,000-square-foot building with 35 parking spaces. Murphy's on Fairmount now employs 35 full-time workers. All are City Heights residents. This is a particular point of satisfaction for Mark and the Kassab family.

The Kassabs have had many business ventures in other parts of Southern California, but Mark says they are always short-term, sold to allow them to focus on their City Heights businesses.

"I like my neighborhood. I want to stay here," Mark says. The Kassabs built the Chevron station near the I-15 on University Avenue from the ground up in 2001 and opened a second store, Supermercado Murphy's, on University in 2005. Altogether, the Kassabs'

businesses employ more than 100 City Heights residents. While Mark does not require his employees to be City Heights residents, he believes employing locals is good for his business and good for the community.

As Mark reminisces about his 34 years in the United States you can see the gleam in his eyes as he says, "You come from a poor, humble lifestyle. You work hard, and this country gives you everything you want."

Mark has been married for 25 years and has four kids. They have all attended Our Lady of Sacred Heart, a Catholic school in City Heights. Besides business, Mark's other passion is running. He runs 45 miles a week and has completed multiple marathons. Peering into the future, Mark envisions the Kassabs opening an upscale supermarket in City Heights that provides organic foods.

— Staff Report

HEALTH



Mama's Kitchen Executive Director Alberto Cortés and Executive Chef Anne Garger say the industrial-sized commercial kitchen in their new City Heights headquarters allows the organization to expand its food preparation capacity and improve the quality of its prepared meals. **Photos/City Heights Life**

Mama's Kitchen moves to City Heights

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

After undergoing a \$1.4 million renovation, a once-decrepit building on Home Avenue is now the gleaming headquarters of Mama's Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that provides food free of charge for people living with AIDS or cancer throughout San

Diego County.

For 17 years, Mama's Kitchen prepared meals out of a leased church basement in the Bankers Hill area of San Diego and delivered them to clients' homes. The space was cramped, about 5,400 square feet, half of the size of its new City Heights facility. The nonprofit also ran a food pantry out of another location in North Park.

Now everything is under one roof.

The two-story building on Home Avenue at Beech Street includes an industrial-sized commercial kitchen, a spacious pantry, office space for staff, a lobby area for volunteers, and a community meeting room. Hours of operations for Mama's Pantry are now double what they used to be: six hours a day, five days a week, up from five hours a day, three days a week.

"We will be able to serve more people," said Alberto Cortés, Mama's executive director, during a recent tour of the new headquarters. "We have never turned anybody away for services. In setting up this operation, we are really planning for the future."

According to Mama's, more than 7,000 people in the region live with AIDS, and the number is expected to grow because medical advances have enabled many AIDS patients to live longer. In addition, more than 12,500 cases of cancer are diagnosed in the county each year. Mama's believes it must ex-

[KITCHEN, P11]

The Vietnamese were the first major refugee group to settle in City Heights

By Jon Luna

City Heights Life History Columnist

City Heights' evolution from a predominantly white suburban community to a vibrant melting pot started in the 1970s with the end of the Vietnam War.

On April 30, 1975, about two years after the U.S. decided to pull out of the Cold War-era conflict, the communist-led North Vietnamese army captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. With the fall of Saigon, thousands of Vietnamese refugees fled Southeast Asia to the United States in the hopes of starting new lives. They became the first major refugee group to settle in City Heights. Cambodians and Laotians, whose lives were also devastated by the war, followed them.

When the Vietnamese refugees first arrived, they were housed in more than 1,000 tents and Quonset huts at Camp Pendleton in north San Diego County. The newcomers needed to be immunized and documented, so they were sent to military bases throughout the country. Camp Pendleton temporarily hosted more than 50,000 refugees. Eventually, they were relocated to various areas in Southern California, including Long Beach and Orange County.

Many of the refugees chose to stay in San Diego because the weather here is similar to that in areas of Southeast Asia, if not better. City Heights, in particular, was attractive to the newcomers because it had an abundance of affordable housing, including a large number of apartment complexes. Today, the San Di-

ego region is home to more than 33,000 Vietnamese, according to the Vietnamese Federation of San Diego.

Once the initial wave of refugees settled down and gained a degree of financial stability, they petitioned for their relatives from Southeast Asia to join them in the United States. Consequently, San Diego experienced a second wave of Southeast Asian immigration by the early 1980s. By then, City Heights was well on its way to becoming an ethnic enclave with not just a substantial number of Asian refugees, but also Hispanic immigrants.

Settling as a group in a particular community makes it easier for immigrants to maintain their values and culture in a foreign country while simultaneously helping one another out. That's why high concentrations of a specific ethnic group typically exist in a very small area. These ethnic enclaves can be found all over the country. In San Francisco, there is Chinatown. In San Diego, there is City Heights, which is home to various ethnic clusters, including an emerging Little Saigon business district, a six-block stretch of El Cajon Boulevard between Euclid and Highland avenues.

With the arrival of refugees, organizations sprang up to help them settle and assimilate. Over time, City Heights evolved to become a social services hub for immigrants. Today, a plethora of organizations here provide health care, resettlement assistance, job



About 50,400 Vietnamese refugees were housed in a tent city at Camp Pendleton after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Photo reprinted with permission from the San Diego Union-Tribune

training, education, and other services to those who are new to America. Immigrants have plenty of resources at their disposal because of our long history of accepting them for well over thirty years.

The acceptance of refugees from the Vietnam War during the 1970s was just the beginning of

City Heights' transformation into a melting pot. In future columns I will explain the journey of other ethnic and refugee groups leaving their homeland and settling in the welcoming and wonderful community of City Heights.

— Jon Luna is a first-generation Filipino-American who was raised in City Heights. A San

Diego State University graduate, he still lives there and works regularly as a substitute teacher at Hoover High School and other City Heights public schools. He is also pursuing a master's degree in history from the University of San Diego. Jon's research comes from the archives of the San Diego History Center.

KITCHEN, from P10

pand to meet growing demand.

The organization is in the midst of a capital campaign to raise \$5.3 million to sustain the operations of its new facility and expand its capacity within three years to serve at least 750 clients each day with home-delivered meals, more than doubling its current load. Cortés said Mama's has so far met 20 percent its fundraising goal.

On a recent Friday afternoon, the first floor of Mama's was filled with rows of paper bags of food waiting for volunteers to pick up and deliver to clients. Delivery days are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On those days, clients receive a hot meal and enough provisions for breakfast, lunch and dinner to last them a few days until the next delivery.

On this particular Friday, the hot meal was beef tips over buttered noodles accompanied by peas, carrots and a biscuit. The meals are not one size fits all. Anne Garger,

Mama's executive chef, said the staff does its best to tailor meals to clients' dietary restrictions. Some clients don't eat meat or fish and others can't tolerate dairy, so substitutes are provided.

"We try to think, if you are feeding your family, what would you feed them? That's what we give them," Garger said.

It's not just the AIDS and cancer patients who get three meals a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Mama's also provides the meals to the clients' children. The breast cancer population, it has noticed, is often made up of young mothers with children. When these women are undergoing chemotherapy, they often don't feel well enough to cook for their family.

"Home delivery meals aren't based on income," Cortés said. "It's based on the philosophy that we are taking care of people who are sick, who are vulnerable to hunger, because of their inability to prepare their own meals due to their illnesses."

Mama's also operates a pantry, a service for those affected by AIDS

who are physically able to come and pick up their own food. Clients can use the pantry once a month to get about 25 items at a time, free of charge.

The staff of 12 at Mama's is supplemented by an army of volunteers. As many as 750 volunteers help out with various aspects of the operation. Altogether, they donate about 30,000 hours a year in service. "This is really the work of many people," Cortés said.



Left: Mama's Kitchen provides food, free of charge, for more than 1,500 people annually in San Diego County who live with AIDS or cancer. Hundreds of volunteers help prepare and package meals for home deliveries, as well as staff the food pantry.

What's going on?

¿Qué está pasando?

October

6

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

2144 Pan American Rd. W
San Diego, CA 92101
Jobtoberfest: Job Fair for
People with Disabilities
*Bring your resume and dress
for success
Contact: Caren Harris (619) 767-2163

10 to 11 a.m.

3795 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
San Diego Symphony
Outreach Program
A string Quartet featuring
works by Schubert, Dvorak
and more.
Contact: Aglae Saint-Lot
(619) 641-6103

7

10 to 11 a.m.

3795 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
South America, High
and Low
Contact: (619) 641-6100

6 to 9 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
CALGRIP Friday Teen
Night
Ages: 12-18 years old
(619) 641-6125

8

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

City Heights Farmers
Market
Fairmount Ave.
& Wightman St.

1 to 1:45 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Voice Class
Fee: \$25.00
(619) 641-6125

10

2 to 6 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Teen Center Activities
Ages: 11-17 years old
Contact: (619) 641-6125

5 to 6 p.m.

4440 Wightman St. #200
San Diego, CA 92105
Healthy Lifestyles Nutrition
Contact: Marilynn (619) 321-2920

11

noon to 1 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Pilates/ Ab Strength Training
Contact: (619) 516-3082

6 to 7:30 p.m.

2807 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
Dad's Club
Contact: Kenneth Woods
(619) 795-2036

12

4 to 5:30 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Zumba Cardio Fit
Contact: (619) 516-3082

1 to 2:30 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Recreation Tennis
Program
Ages: 5-7 years old
Fee: \$10.00/mo
Contact: (619) 641-6107

13

10 to 11 a.m.

3795 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
Early Colonial America
Contact: (619) 641-6100

6 to 7 p.m.

4305 University Ave. #640
San Diego, CA 92105
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Volunteer Orientation
(858) 536-4900

14

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

City Heights Wellness
Center
Eligibility Assistance
Contact: Lorrie Scott
(760) 751-4193

5 to 6 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Steps
Contact: (619) 516-3082

15

9:15 to 9:45 a.m.

4380 Landis St.
Violin Class
Fee: \$25.00
(619) 641-6125

1 to 4 p.m.

Myrtle Avenue & 46th Street
San Diego, CA 92105
47th St. Canyon Restoration
*Remember to wear closed-toe
shoes & sun protection. Please
bring your own drinking water.

17

2 to 3 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Pee Wee Sports
Age: 3-7 years old
Contact: (619) 516-3082

18

1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Zumba Atomic
Contact: (619) 516-3082

6 to 7:30 p.m.

4271 Myrtle Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
Dad's Club
Contact: Kenneth Woods
(619) 795-2036

19

1 to 2 p.m.

4440 Wightman St. #200
San Diego, CA 92105
Exercise Program
Contact: Marilynn
(619) 321-2920

4:15 to 5:15

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Arts & Craft Class
Ages: 4-17 years old
Contact: (619) 516-3082

20

10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

3795 Fairmount Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
Halloween!
Contact: (619) 641-6100

6 to 7:30 p.m.

4271 Myrtle Ave.
San Diego, CA 92105
Dad's Club
Contact: Kenneth Woods
(619) 795-2036

21

2 to 6 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
Teen Center Activities
Ages: 11-17 years old
Contact: (619) 641-6125

3 to 4 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
Recreation Tennis Program
Ages: 5-7 years old
Fee: \$10.00/ mo
Contact: (619) 641-6107

22

8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Home Avenue & Olive
Street
San Diego, CA 92105
Community Housing-
Works: Facelift
RSVP by Oct. 8
Contact: Linda Pen-
nington
(619) 563-4014

23

2:30 to 3 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Fit for Kids & Family
Ages: 6-12 years old
Contact: (619) 516-3082

24

3 to 5 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
Youth Tennis San Diego
Program
Ages: 5-17 years old
Contact: (619) 221-9000

2:30 to 3

4302 Landis St.
Fit for Kids & Family
Ages: 6-12 years old
Contact: (619) 516-3082

25

2:30 to 3

4302 Landis St.
Fit for Kids & Family
Ages: 6-12 years old
Contact: (619) 516-3082

5 to 6:30 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
Recreation Tennis Program
Ages: 5-7 years old
Fee: \$10.00/ mo
Contact: (619) 641-6107

2 to 6 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
Teen Center Activities
Ages: 11-17 years old
(619) 641-6125

26

2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

4440 Wightman St. #200
San Diego, CA 92105
Martial Arts Class
Contact: Marilynn (619)
321-2920

3 to 5 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Youth Tennis San Diego Program
Ages: 5-17 years old
Contact: (619) 221-9000

27

noon to 1 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
Step, Circuit Training
and Meditation
Contact: (619) 516-3082

5 to 8 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
American Youth Outreach
Self-Defense Karate
Ages: 5-17 years old
Fee: \$7.00/ class
Contact: (619) 282-3066

29

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

4302 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Hoop Teams Mentoring &
Conditioning
(619) 516-3082

31

5 to 6 p.m.

4440 Wightman St. #200
San Diego, CA 92105
Healthy Lifestyles Nutrition
Marilynn (619) 321-2920

4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

4380 Landis St.
San Diego, CA 92105
Creative Crafts
Ages: 6-14 years old
Fee: \$.50 per class
Contact: (619) 641-6125

Submit events to editor@cityheightslife.com.

CALENDAR EDITOR: JULIE LE

— Julie Le was born and raised in San Diego. She graduated at the top of her class from Hoover High School. Julie is attending the University of California, San Diego, majoring in urban studies and planning while working at Price Charities.

Day of the Dead

The Fifth Annual Day of the Dead Festival will take place 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Oct. 28 at the City Heights Urban Village Park off Fairmount Avenue and Landis Street.

The traditional Mexican holiday, called Dia de los Muertos in Spanish, can be traced back thousands of years. Celebrations typically feature altars decorated with the photographs and favorite foods and beverages of deceased loved ones.

The festival is open to the public, free of charge, and includes live entertainment, educational altars and booths, school tours, and Mexican food.

Día de los Muertos

El Quinto Festival Annual del Día de los Muertos se llevará a cabo el día 28 de octubre de 10 a.m. a 7 p.m. en el Parque City Heights Urban Village que está ubicado entre Fairmount Avenue y Landis Street.

La celebración tradicional mexicana del Día de los Muertos es una tradición que se remonta miles de años. La celebración usualmente incluye altares decorados con fotografías de las comidas y bebidas preferidas de seres queridos fallecidos.

El festival está abierto para el público en general de forma gratuita e incluye entretenimiento en vivo, altares y puestos de información educativos, paseos escolares y comida mexicana.

